1: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945) 1949 ND12 Nahane ND12

753 Currently the Canadian government provides qualified medical attention for Indians at
754 two hospitals, one for Yukon Indians in Whitehorse and another for Indians of British Columbia at Port St. John. The former hospital is about three hundred miles from Lower Post, while the latter is about six hundred. To secure admission and permission for air travel to either hospital, the missionary or police must radio the Indian Agent at Telegraph Creek. Should the agent be away from his office, traveling in the performance of his duties, a reply to the wire giving authorization for transportation and hospitalization may be delayed for several days. Such delay occurred during the summer of 1941 in the case of a young victim of spinal meningitis. The boy was in delirium for three days before authorization was received to fly him to Whitehorse, where he died and was buried.

754 A nurse and physician employed by the Indian Affairs Branch visit the Indian community at Lower Post each summer and suggest medical or hospital treatment as required. The Mounted Police remain vigilant for evidence of venereal infection, and when a source of such disease is reported insist on the patient receiving prompt treatment. These precautionary attitudes contribute to the fact that the degree of venereal infection, despite the recent large influx of strangers, is relatively slight.

755 Native attitudes toward hospitalization vary. A number of men expressed admiration for the air forces' hospital at Watson Lake and also spoke well of the care they had received in the government hospital at Whitehorse. Other people severely criticized the regimen of public hospitals, some without themselves having been patients. Speaking of the Whitehorse institution, where he had gone to have a dislocated hip bone reset, Old Man claimed that the words for white patients are superior to those reserved for Indians. Asked how he liked the hospital, he answered: "I didn't like it. You smell something." The odor, he said, reminded him of death and was absent in the white wards which he had casually visited. He admitted that the staff of the institution had "treated me fine." Another informant complained that the same hospital had starved his young daughter, feeding her only bread and water twice a day. He asserted that the hospital employs doctors or government agents who try to starve Indians to death.

Death

761 Death, the separation of body and soul, is a condition that usually results from old age and from serious illness or accident. In holding these notions of death, the Kaska are not sharp functions assigned to dying. For the individual, his family, and friends the final moments are to be avoided and delayed as long as possible. Death, a bad thing in the conceptualization of which the Indian is never at ease, not only represents a tragedy for the deceased, but also introduces danger for the surviving members of the latter's family as well as other members of the community who may come into the orbit of the event.

761 The living organism represents a union of body and soul or, as the latter is referred to by
779 the Kaska, wind.* Some people also reported the spiritual existence of the shadow, but did not clearly differentiate this concept from wind. Although death represents a final dissolution of the body-soul relationship, certain temporary alternations may occur without neces-

* Throughout this section the words "soul" (wind) and "spirit" will be used with certain definite meanings. The soul refers to the spiritual attribute of the body. Upon death it becomes a spirit. The visible manifestation of a spirit is referred to as a "ghost."

1: Honigmann, E-5 (1943-1945) 1949 ND12 Nahane ND12

and grief. A number of older women are well known for the ease with which alcohol to 172
dazes melancholy in them; they signify intoxication by beginning to sob for a deceased 273
daughter or son and refuse to be comforted.

Inquiries regarding mental disease in the Kaska area brought reports of several cases in 272
which individuals of both sexes were described as "going crazy." All of these cases follow 174
a pattern of manic-like behavior involving indiscriminate aggression and violence. Mental disorder is ascribed to several causes, including sorcery endogamy, family incest, excessive sexuality, and worry.

Mrs. Mary Wiley was described by Old Man as "a little crazy." "She always making trouble. She always trying to be better than anybody. Mean. She chop the house, she want to fight us. She talk outside. Harry Long told me: 'Don't go out. Let her come in. We'll fix her.' She chopping outside for this point Old Man showed the ethnographer a single ax cleft on the doorframe of the house in which the latter was living). She wouldn't go in. When she feel like to fight she always like that. She treat his own kid good but sometimes when she lick her kid, I don't know how many times she pound home." Mrs. Wiley died about two years after the incident of the chopping. At the time of her death "they say just kind of quiet; she never speak a word."

Another woman was described who had developed mental illness and killed her grandson. A week after the homicide she died. Her husband, Old Ajax (from whom Iron Creek on the Alaska Highway just below Lower Post is named), had also become "like John Ross, believed, sang 'demon,' and he try to kill his wife." He was finally hospitalized in Vancouver where he died. It was said that both husband and wife were Crow and had married despite the rule of exogamy. Mental disorder was ascribed to this offense. It is interesting to note that John Ross was also deemed "crazy" by both his father and his brother, Nels. Both said that John's aggressive behavior should be reported to the police. Old Ross told the ethnographer that John had several times threatened to kill him.

Old Man described the late Mrs. River Joe as "not all there," and referred to some of her questions as evidence to prove. For example, she couldn't understand why the ethnographer was writing about Indians. On the occasion of a dance in a trader's store, she wanted to know why flour and sugar had to be stored in a dance place. Old Man said she had been "like that" for six years. About 1915, River Joe is reported to have exhibited manic behavior. He sang and acted wildly, went into other people's camps and tried to kill his wife, who had to hide in the bush for a week. He did not try to harm others. In a month he was improved. About two years ago, following his arrest, one of River Joe's sons was taken out of the Kaska area because of another mental disorder.

Without attempting to classify these symptoms, it may be pointed out that all but one 173
of these cases of mental breakdown involve mature men and women and otherwise also conform to the manic-depressive syndrome.* About twenty years ago, according to Harry Long, the Nahane Indians were visited by what appears to have been some kind of group

* Caughlin has distinguished two forms of manic insanity among the Western shoshone. The classical, compulsively indulgent form of the disease, she points out, is common in young people, but the milder form we now recognize doesn't set in until they years of age. Caughlin, Shoshoni Mania: A Study in Social Anthropology (Ms.) 1949.